Horticultural Inspection Society – Central Chapter
Annual Conference
October 19 - 22, 2026

Conference Summary

The Horticultural Inspection Society – Central Chapter and the Illinois Department of Agriculture invite you to attend the 2026 Annual Conference, taking place October 19–22 in Champaign, Illinois. This year's conference will feature an engaging lineup of expert speakers, educational presentations, and field trips. Featured presenters include Dr. Aaron Hager of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who specializes in weed science, herbicide resistance, and weed management in agricultural production systems; Dr. Spencer Walse of the University of California, Davis, and USDA Agricultural Research Service, whose research focuses on postharvest pest management, phytosanitary treatments, and preventing the movement of pests through agricultural trade; Dr. Trent Ford, Illinois State Climatologist, who specializes in climate variability, extreme weather, drought, and the effects of changing climate conditions on agriculture and natural resources; Chris Evans of University of Illinois Extension, who specializes in invasive species management, weed identification and control, and natural-area restoration; Dr. Esther Ngumbi of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, whose work focuses on entomology, plant–insect interactions, beneficial microbes, sustainable crop protection, and food security; and Dr. Fredric Miller of The Morton Arboretum, who specializes in arboriculture, urban forestry, and the identification and management of insect pests affecting trees and other woody plants.

Conference field trips will provide attendees with opportunities to explore several distinctive research and educational facilities in the Champaign-Urbana area. Participants will tour the University of Illinois RIPE Greenhouse, where researchers with the Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency project are working to improve crop productivity by enhancing the natural process of photosynthesis. The tour of the CABBI Greenhouse will highlight research conducted by the Center for Advanced Bioenergy and Bioproducts Innovation, including the development of sustainable crops and biological processes used to produce renewable fuels and other bioproducts. At the University of Illinois Energy Farm, attendees will learn about field-scale research involving bioenergy crops, agricultural production systems, soil health, sustainability, and renewable energy. The conference will also include a visit to Allerton Park and Retreat Center in Monticello, a historic estate known for its formal gardens, outdoor sculptures, woodlands, trails, natural areas, and unique combination of cultural and environmental resources.

The conference will be held October 19–22. Check-in is available on October 19 from 3:00–6:00 PM and again on the morning of the 20th from 6:30–8:00 AM. The event concludes on the 22nd following the business meeting (late morning). Hotel reservations must be made by **Monday, September 21, 2026** to receive the group rate. The conference registration deadline is **Wednesday, September 23, 2026**. If you have concerns about meeting the conference registration deadline, please contact Andrew Mathis at andrew.b.mathis@illinois.gov.

We encourage members to complete conference registration online:
https://www.eventcreate.com/e/illinois2026cchis

Attendees who prefer to register by mail may complete and return the enclosed paper registration forms as soon as possible. Full conference registration is $250.00 per person and includes continental breakfast October 20–22, lunch October 20–21, and the banquet dinner on October 20.

For the conference registration fee, checks should be made payable to H.I.S. Central Chapter. If you register online, remember to include a printout of the registration with your check. If completing a paper registration, please include that as well. Please note that H.I.S. does not accept credit cards, debit cards, or cash. When mailing payment, include a printed copy of the completed registration confirmation and send it to:

DATCP – Liz Meils, H.I.S. Treasurer
2811 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718

Registration fees may also be paid by check during conference check-in. When submitting one check for multiple attendees, please include the names of all registrants on the check's memo line. The registration deadline is Wednesday, September 23, 2026.

Registration fees help cover meeting facilities, speaker travel and lodging, meals for attendees, field-trip admission, and transportation expenses. We sincerely appreciate the continued support of State Plant Regulatory Officials and the Central and National Plant Boards. Their support allows the Horticultural Inspection Society – Central Chapter to promote high standards in plant inspection, strengthen professional relationships, encourage collaboration, and share information essential to protecting plant resources from pests and diseases.

Hotel Accommodations/Reservations and Travel

Hyatt Place Champaign/Urbana
217 N Neil St, Champaign, IL 61820

Use the link below for reservations in our meeting block. The meeting room and hospitality suite are also located in this hotel. **Reservations within our block close on Monday, September 21, 2026**.
Reservations will not be charged until the guest checks in.
Room fee $110.00/night
Discounted parking at $10/day in secure garage

BY PHONE:
• Call the hotel at (217) 531-2800, press "3" and then "1".
• Let me know you'd like to make a reservation in the "Central Chapter" group/special rate code "G-HIS6".

ONLINE (Preferred method):
Go to:
https://www.hyatt.com/shop/rooms/cmizc?location=Hyatt%20Place%20Champaign%2FUrbana&checkinDate=2026-10-19&checkoutDate=2026-10-21&rooms=1&adults=1&kids=0&corp_id=G-HIS6&accessibilityCheck=false

• At the top of the webpage, within the banner, select the word "Special Rate" and make sure you change your Check-in and Checkout date accordingly. (group/special rate code should indicate "G-HIS6".
• Select the type of room [either King Bed (with sofa bed) or King Suite depending on availability] and select "Book".
• Enter your Contact and Payment Information. Make sure to review the booking summary. Once reviewed and ready to book, select "Book My Stay" at the bottom of the page.

Travel Information:
Champaign/Urbana is located in central Illinois and is an hour and fifteen-minute drive north from I-70 or two hour and fifteen-minute drive from I-80 or I-90 in Chicago. The closest airport is Willard Airport (CMI), which is a fifteen-minute drive from the hotel. Chicago O'Hare (ORD) or Chicago Midway (MDW) International Airports are approximately a two hour and fifteen-minute or two hour and thirty-minute drive, respectively. Additionally, Indianapolis International Airport is approximately a two-hour drive.

If flying into Willard Airport (CMI), and need a ride to/from the hotel, coordinate with IDOA staff. Rideshare services from Willard Airport to the hotel cost anywhere between $20.00 to $30.00 during normal hours.

Additional Information

Membership Dues
HIS membership dues for 2027 are $20.00 and must be submitted no later than December 10th. Membership dues can be submitted and included in the registration check - however, be sure to fill out a separate membership application for each individual. If check includes membership dues for multiple attendees, please include relevant names on the check memo line.

Membership Application:
https://www.cchis.org/membership.html

Send your membership application and check to:

DATCP – Liz Meils, H.I.S. Treasurer
2811 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718

Exhibit Displays
If you are interested and want to bring a display from your state, please indicate this on the registration form. An area will be available for tabletop or floor displays.

State Reports
Each state should prepare a report using the standard HIS State Report form. The report should briefly summarize significant pests, diseases, activities, trends, and changes in your state. Please bring at least one printed copy for each attending state—ideally 30 or more, so all attendees can receive one. State report presentations are limited to five minutes. If you're unable to print your report before the conference, you may email it to Chapter Secretary John Mortenson at jmortenson@nd.gov for digital distribution. All reports will be posted in the Members Only section of our website (cchis.org) after the conference.

Attire
In line with the HIS–Central Chapter motto, "To make professionalism a part of every effort," please wear professional yet comfortable attire. Check the local forecast before traveling to the conference. Wednesday's tour will include outdoor activities, so boots and field clothing may be appropriate.

The hospitality room is open for networking, committee meetings, and welcoming new members- bring photos to share!

HORTICULTURAL INSPECTION SOCIETY – CENTRAL CHAPTER

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 19 – 22, 2026 – CHAMPAIGN, IL

HYATT PLACE, 217 N NEIL STREET CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

MONDAY OCTOBER 19, 2026

TIME	TOPIC
	Travel If flying into Willard Airport, and needing a ride to the hotel, coordinate with IDOA Andrew Mathis andrew.b.mathis@illinois.gov
3:00 – 6:00 PM	**Registration – Basement** Registration fees and membership dues payable by check to H.I.S. Central Chapter
6:00 – 8:00 PM	**Dinner** on your own and explore Champaign-Urbana Don't forget to look at pamphlet in welcome bag for restaurant options and optional activities
8:00 – 11:00 PM	**Hospitality Suite** The hospitality room is open for networking, committee meetings, and welcoming new members – bring photos to share!

TUESDAY OCTOBER 20, 2026

TIME	TOPIC
6:30 – 8:00 AM	**Breakfast**, 1st floor (provided by hotel)
6:30 – 8:00 AM	**Registration – Basement**
	Make way to Basement for meeting
8:00 – 8:15 AM	**Welcome by Illinois Department of Agriculture Staff** Introduction of Illinois Department of Agriculture Staff
8:15 – 8:30 AM	**Introduction of Central Chapter HIS Board and Members** Andrew Mathis, Illinois Department of Agriculture
8:30 – 9:30 AM	Dr. Aaron Hager, **University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana** | Crop Sciences | Illinois

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Time	Topic
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Dr. Spencer Walse, **UCDavis** and **USDA ARS** Spencer Walse | Department of Environmental Toxicology Spencer Walse : USDA ARS
10:30 – 10:45 AM	**Break**
10:45 – 11:00 AM	**STATE REPORTS:** South Dakota, Ohio, and Nebraska
11:00 AM – 12PM	Chris Evans, **University of Illinois Extension** Christopher Evans | global | Illinois Extension | UIUC
12:00 – 1:00 PM	**Lunch – Basement (covered by registration)** Menu Fried Chicken, baked beans and green beans, tossed salad Premium salad buffet for dietary restrictions Assorted cupcakes Tea, Lemonade, Water
1:00 – 1:15 PM	**STATE REPORTS:** Michigan, Wisconsin, and Missouri
1:15 – 2:15 PM	Dr. Trent Ford, **Illinois State Climatologist** **About – Illinois State Climatologist**
2:15 – 2:30 PM	**STATE REPORTS:** Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota
2:30 – 2:45 PM	**Break**
2:45 – 3:45 PM	Dr. Esther Ngumbi, **University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana** Esther Ngumbi | School of Integrative Biology | Illinois
3:45 – 4:45 PM	Dr. Fredric Miller, **The Morton Arboretum** Fredric Miller, PhD | The Morton Arboretum
4:45 – 5:00 PM	**STATE REPORTS:** North Dakota, Kansas, and Illinois
5:00 – 6:00 PM	**Open Discussion – Round Table** Includes updates from the Central Plant Board, Missouri and Kansas interstate inspection, and other attending chapters.
6:00 – 8:00 PM	**Dinner – Basement (covered by registration)** Menu Smothered pork chops and oven roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, tossed salad. Premium salad buffet for dietary restrictions. Assorted cupcakes. Tea, Lemonade, Water.
8:00 – 11:00 PM	**Hospitality Suite** The hospitality room is open for networking, committee meetings, and welcoming new members – bring photos to share!

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Wednesday October 21, 2026

Time	Topic
6:30 – 8:00 AM	**Breakfast**, 1st floor (provided by hotel)
8:00 – 8:15 AM	**Prepare for day of travel** Snacks and water available upon loading and unloading the bus.
8:00 – 8:15 AM	**Load Bus** – North side of hotel and entrance to parking garage
8:30 – 9:30 AM	**Tour of University of Illinois RIPE Greenhouse** 1906 South Fourth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 **University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana** Our Story | RIPE **Tour of CABBI Greenhouse** 1902 South Fourth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 **Center for Advanced Bioenergy and Bioproducts Innovation** Mission & Vision - CABBI
9:30 - 9:45 AM	**Load Bus**
10:00 – 11:00 AM	**Tour of University of Illinois Energy Farm** **University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana** 4110 S. Race St. Urbana, IL 61802 Energy Farm – College of ACES, University of Illinois
11:00 – 11:15 AM	**Load Bus**
12:00 – 1 PM	**Lunch** at Allerton Park and Retreat Center Box Lunch – Sandwiches, chips, and drinks (covered by registration)
1 – 1:15 PM	**Break and walking to Mansion to begin formal tour of property**
1:15 – 4:00 PM	**Tour of Allerton Park and Retreat Center** 515 Old Timber Road Monticello, Illinois 61856 **Allerton – Park & Retreat Center**
4:00 - 4:15 PM	**Load Bus to return to hotel**
6:00 – 8:00 PM	**Dinner** on your own and explore Champaign-Urbana Don't forget to look at pamphlet in welcome bag for restaurant options and optional activities
8:00 – 11:00 PM	**Hospitality Suite** The hospitality room is open for networking, committee meetings, and welcoming new members – bring photos to share!

Thursday October 22, 2026

Time	Topic
6:30 – 8:00 AM	**Breakfast**, 1st floor (provided by hotel)
8:00 – 11:00 AM	**Business Meeting – Basement** Including remarks from next interstate inspection and annual meeting host state.

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Central Chapter - Horticulture Inspection Society

2026 Conference - October 19 - 22, 2026

Champaign/Urbana, Illinois

Registration Form – Must be received by Wednesday, September 23, 2026

NAME			
TITLE	AFFILIATION		
STREET ADDRESS		PO BOX	
CITY		STATE	ZIP CODE
E-MAIL		PHONE:	
Special dietary needs:			
Other special accommodations needed:			
I would like to bring an exhibit. Please indicate details here:			

Registration fee is $250.00 per attendee. Payment is by check only, made payable to: HIS **Central Chapter**

_____ x $250.00 + _____ x $20.00 = $_____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Payment will be made upon arrival

Annual HIS membership dues are $20 and must be submitted no later than December 10th of each year. Membership dues can be submitted and included in the registration check—however, be sure to fill out a separate membership application for each individual.

Send payment, registration, and membership forms to:

DATCP - Liz Meils (HIS Treasurer)
2811 Agriculture Dr.
Madison, WI 53718

Reminder: A block of rooms is being held at the Hyatt Place Champaign/Urbana, 217 N Neil St, Champaign, IL 61820: https://www.hyatt.com/shop/rooms/cmizc?location=Hyatt%20Place%20Champaign%2FUrbana&checkinDate=2026-10-19&checkoutDate=2026-10-21&rooms=1&adults=1&kids=0&corp_id=G-HIS6&accessibilityCheck=false. The cut-off date for the group rate is Monday, September 21, 2026.

If you have any detailed questions or concerns contact CCHIS Vice-President, Andrew Mathis at Andrew.B.Mathis@Illinois.gov, 217-790-1145 or CCHIS President, Braden Hoch at Braden.Hoch@ks.gov, 785-307-3590.

HORTICULTURAL INSPECTION SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

-Return no later than December 10 of each year-

(Please Print)

NAME: _____POSITION: _____

ADDRESS:_____

CITY:_____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATE:_____

AREA OF INTEREST: _____

(OPTIONAL: Example - aphids, scale insects, biological control, plant pathology, horticulture, etc.)

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (Check one): ◯ Regular ◯ Subscribing

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Check here if you wish to have a receipt emailed to you: ☐

Please return this form no later than December 10th of each year along with $20.00 for each regular, or subscribing membership (see definition below).
Submit one form for each member in order to collect contact information.

(Make checks payable to HIS Central Chapter)

Mail to: DATCP - Liz Meils (HIS Treasurer)
2811 Agriculture Dr., Madison, WI 53718

Email: elizabeth.meils@wi.gov

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone who meets the qualifications as specified in the Horticultural Inspection Society, Central Chapter constitution is eligible for regular membership in the Society, subject to payment of annual dues. The membership year begins with the annual meeting (typically held in October each year). Regular members will receive the Horticultural Inspection Society, Central Chapter Newsletter, and should contribute to the Newsletter frequently. Regular members should also attend Horticultural Inspection Society, Central Chapter meetings

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONSTITUTION

"The regular membership of this organization shall be limited to state employees engaged in plant pest inspection work as inspectors or as supervisors, in field, laboratory, or office, other than administrative personnel. Honorary membership may be awarded to administrators or to others, who by their experience and achievements and interest are worthy of this distinction."

"Members from outside the Central Plant Board region shall be welcome to attend and participate in discussions of this organization chapter. Administrative personnel in plant pest control work are welcome to attend and participate in discussions as special guests of this organization."

Subscribers: This chapter has established the category of "Subscribers" to enable friends of the society, such as previously employed inspectors, inspectors from outside the Central Plant Board region, researchers and similar persons to be affiliated with, to receive and contribute to the newsletter, and to attend meetings.